

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 13514 ACTION SECSTATE OCT 30.

QUOTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 13514

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, EAIR, LE

SUBJECT: REPORTED KIDNAPPING OF AMERICAN CITIZEN HERMAN CLYDE
HUDDLESTON

1. ON EVENING OF OCTOBER 29 AMERICAN CITIZEN HERMAN CLYDE HUDDLESTON, A PILOT FOR TRANS-MEDITERRANEAN AIRLINES (TMA) WAS KIDNAPPED BY AN ARMED GROUP FROM HIS APARTMENT LOCATED IN THE VICINITY OF NEW EMBASSY BUILDING (RAMLET-EL-BAIDA).

2. KIDNAPPERS ENTERED APARTMENT AT 9:30 P.M. AND DEPARTED WITH HUDDLESTON ABOUT 11:30 P.M., ACCORDING TO MRS. HUDDLESTON FROM WHOM THIS INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED. HUDDLESTON HAD BEEN EXPECTING COMPANY AND OPENED THE DOOR.

3. MRS. HUDDLESTON STATED THAT HER HUSBAND WAS AN AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR BUT THAT HE WAS NOT ENGAGED IN TRANSMITTING MESSAGES; THAT ANY RADIO EQUIPMENT IN THE APARTMENT WAS FOR RECEIVING. IT WAS APPARENT THAT

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KIDNAPPERS DID NOT PICK ON HUDDLESTON'S APARTMENT BY

CHANCE BUT ENTERED FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF CONFISCATING RADIO EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING TRANSMITTER, WHICH THEY CLAIMED HUDDLESTON HAD. TWO HOURS WERE SPENT SEARCHING APARTMENT FOR RADIO EQUIPMENT.

4. EMBASSY HAS CONTACTED SECURITY AUTHORITIES AND TMA HAS DONE LIKEWISE.

5. WE HAVE MEANWHILE CONTACTED TMA PRESIDENT MUNIR ABU-HAIDER. ABU-HAIDER STATES THAT HUDDLESTON HAS WORKED FOR TMA ABOUT FOUR YEARS. HE ALSO ADDED THAT HUDDLESTON VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN RADIO ACTIVITY AND THAT HE FREQUENTLY BRAGGED ABOUT HAVING SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL EQUIPMENT IN THE COUNTRY. HE ALSO HAD ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST CONSPICUOUS AERIALS ON THE TOP OF HIS APARTMENT BUILDING. ABU-HAIDER ALSO INFORMED US THAT HE WAS WORKING NOT ONLY THROUGH THE POLICE BUT THROUGH OTHER PRIVATE CHANNELS. HE LATER CALLED TO SAY THAT HE HAD ESTABLISHED CONTACT AND THAT HUDDLESTON WAS BEING HELD BY MAIN LINE PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS WHO COMPLAINED TO ABU-HAIDER THAT HUDDLESTON INDEED WAS NOT ONLY TRANSMITTING (PALESTINIAN CAMPS ARE LOCATED QUITE CLOSE TO THE AREA IN QUESTION), BUT WAS ALSO COMMUNICATING WITH A MR. RIZK OF THE PHALANGE MOVEMENT.

6. ABU-HAIDER IS DOING HIS MAXIMUM TO OBTAIN HUDDLESTON'S RELEASE BUT IS NOT CERTAIN IF HE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. IF SUCCESSFUL, HE WILL FLY HUDDLESTON AND FAMILY (WIFE AND TEEN-AGE BOY) OUT OF COUNTRY IMMEDIATELY.

7. EMBASSY AND ABU-HAIDER REMAINING IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER ON THIS MATTER AND WILL REPORT FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. AS A MATTER OF PRECAUTION (AND PROBABLY FROM PRESSURE ON THE PART OF THOSE CONCERNED) ABU-HAIDER IS TRANSFERRING HIS FOREIGN NATIONAL PILOTS TO OTHER LOCATIONS.
GODLEY UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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